EH 220 – HONORS LITERATURE

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of works of literature against the background of philosophy, history, and the arts, second semester.

TEXTS

Texts are listed in the order we will use them.

6. Regular printing of materials from Houston Cole Library Reserve or from the internet.

OBJECTIVES

Not only in literature, but also in art, philosophy, and many other fields, "the question of the body" has been an exciting topic in recent years. Challenging the tradition of separating mind from body, the world of intellect and ideas from the world of the flesh, scholars in all areas of the humanities have investigated this question. They have noted that even though the body may seem to be the most universal aspect of human beings, historical and anthropological studies show that wildly divergent conceptions of the body have held power in different lands and eras. We can also see that the way the body is represented at a particular time and place will be closely related to the values of the culture in power there. For this reason, analyzing how bodies have been represented may be crucial to the understanding of a wide range of topics: beauty, sexuality, gender, race, nationalism, colonialism, pornography, and religion, to name just a few.

This course is designed to let students explore selected literary texts, films and works of art, among other artifacts, from a cultural studies approach: that is, from an approach that examines how the meanings of cultural objects are related to the social, historical, and political contexts in which they are produced and interpreted. It is not designed to make students follow a predetermined line of thought or to come to any predetermined conclusion. Instead, we will explore this question of the body in relation to literature, art, and film and see where our thinking leads us.

TOPICS

*Week One*
Introductions: body talk
Douglas, from *Purity and Danger* (reserve)
Introductions to Romanticism

*Week Two*
No class--Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Rime of the Ancient Mariner (Parts 1-4)
   Group ONE Response Essays due
Rime of the Ancient Mariner (Parts 5-7)
   Group TWO Response Essays due

Week Three
Frankenstein (5-55)
   Group THREE Response Essays due
Cohen, “Monster Culture (Seven Theses)” (reserve)
Frankenstein (56-98)

Week Four
Frankenstein (99-152)
   ESSAY ONE DUE
Frankenstein (153-215)
Frankenstein; Francavilla, “The Android as Dopplegänger” (reserve)

Week Five
Metropolis
Clark, “Scientific Gazing and the Cinematic Body Politic” (internet)

Week Six
Ruppert, “Technology and the Construction of Gender in Fritz Lang's Metropolis” (internet)
Bladerunner
   Group ONE Response Essays due
Bladerunner

Week Seven
Bladerunner; Dresser, “The New Eve: The Influence of Paradise Lost and Frankenstein on Blade Runner”
Bladerunner
Edward Scissorhands
   Group TWO Response Essays due

Week Eight
Gray, “The Cyborg Body Politic” (reserve)
Edward Scissorhands
   Group THREE Response Essays due
Edward Scissorhands; Potter, “Edward Schizohands: The Postmodern Gothic Body”

Week Nine
Kafka, “The Metamorphosis” (89-122)
   ESSAY TWO DUE
Kafka, “The Metamorphosis” (122-39)
   Group ONE Response Essays due
Fiedler “Introductory” (reserve)

Week Ten
Kafka, “The Hunger Artist” (268-77)
Group TWO Response Essays due
Kafka, “The Penal Colony” (140-67)
Kafka, “A Report to an Academy” (pages 250-59)

Group THREE Response Essays due

Week Eleven
Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (65-102)
Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (102-33)
Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (133-64)

Week Twelve
Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (through page 58)
Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (61-93)
Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (97-163)

Group ONE Response Essays due

Week Thirteen
Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (164-216)

*Freaks*

*Freaks*; Hawkins, “‘One of Us’: Tod Browning’s *Freaks*” (reserve)

Group TWO Response Essays due

Week Fourteen

*Freaks*

Final Exam